

A Condensed
Vernacular
Translation
of the
New
Testament

Designed Primarily for the First-Time Reader



George E. Jennings

In *A Condensed Vernacular Translation of the New Testament*, George E. Jennings presents its concepts and highlights to the first-time New Testament reader.

The author has presented the biblical books in a particular order in terms of the message he offers. The simple and direct language employed herein will enable the reader to access and retain the sayings of Jesus, the drama of his life, and the easily remembered turns of phrase. The beatitudes are rendered in a way that makes them thought-provoking, and this also applies to the quotations of Paul, as well as to the Book of Revelation.

Readers who are approaching the Bible for the first time will find their path cleared by *A Condensed Vernacular Translation of the New Testament*. It is enlightening, and is certain to inspire readers to continue further study.

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DESIGNED PRIMARILY FOR
THE FIRST-TIME READER

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To Frances, my dear wife,
who has given me so much support
and encouragement,
I dedicate this book

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Luke

To Zechariah a priest, the Lord's angel said, Elizabeth your wife will have a son whom you'll call John. He'll prepare the people for the Lord's coming.

When Caesar Augustus decreed the first census, Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral home. Since the inn was full when they arrived, they stayed in a stable. When Mary had her son, she wrapped him in linen strips and laid him in a feed trough. When they circumcised him on the eighth day, they named him Jesus.

When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents took him up to Jerusalem. Without their knowledge, Jesus remained behind when his parents headed for home. When they realized that Jesus wasn't in their caravan, they returned to Jerusalem and looked for Jesus. Finding him, Mary said, Child, your father and I have been out of our minds looking for you. He said, Didn't you know I had to be in my father's house?

Jesus said, Nothing is hidden that won't be revealed. He who uses what he has will be given more, but he who doesn't use what he has will have it taken from him. Hearing that his mother and brothers wanted to see him, he said, My mother and my brothers are those who do God's will.

If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. He who wants to save his life will lose it. He who loses his life for me will save it. What good is it to gain the whole world and lose your soul?

Jesus said, The least among you is the greatest. Having a little child stand beside him, he said, He who receives this little child receives me and he who receives me receives him who sent me.

A Scribe said, Who's my neighbor? Jesus said, A man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers. They stripped off his clothes, beat him, and left him half dead. A priest came along. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. A Levite did the same. When a Samaritan came along, he gave him first aid, put him on his donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, Take care of him. When I return, I'll pay you for any extra expenses you may have. Which one was a neighbor to him who was attacked by robbers? When the Scribe said, The one who helped him, Jesus said, Go and do what he did.

When Jesus was a guest in their home, Mary sat at his feet and listened to what he said. Martha who was preparing the meal said, Lord, tell my sis-

ter to help me. He said, Mary is involved in spiritual things that are eternal. You're involved in material things that are temporary.

In the judgment, the Queen of the South will condemn this generation. She came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom. Someone greater than Solomon is here. When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh, they repented. Someone greater than Jonah is here.

God's kingdom is like a mustard seed. It's the smallest seed, but it grows as large as a tree. God's kingdom is like yeast that makes the dough rise.

If a man with a hundred sheep loses one, won't he look for it? When he finds it, he'll say to his friends and neighbors, Rejoice with me, for I've found my lost sheep. In heaven there'll be more rejoicing over one sinner who repents than for ninety-nine righteous people who don't need to repent.

If a woman with ten silver coins loses one, won't she look for it? When she finds it, to her friends and neighbors, she'll say, Rejoice with me, for I've found my lost coin.

If a father with two sons loses one, won't he look for him? When his wayward son returns home, the father will say to his friends and neighbors, Rejoice with me, for I've found my lost son.

Lazarus who was poor and covered with sores was left at a rich man's gate. He longed to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Dogs licked his sores. When he died, angels took him to heaven.

When the rich man died, he went to hell. He said, Father Abraham, send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for this flame is scorching me. Abraham said, While you were on earth, you had everything you wanted. Lazarus had nothing but misery. Now he's in comfort while you're roasting in the fires of hell. No one can go from here to you and no one can come from you to us. He said, Send him to my father's house to tell my five brothers not to come to this place of torment. Abraham said, Let them hear Moses and the prophets. He said, If someone from the dead goes to them, they'll repent. Abraham said, If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen to someone who's been raised from the dead.

A Pharisee and a tax collector went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee said, God, I'm glad I'm not like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all my income. The tax collector said, God, have mercy on me a sinner. The tax collector, not the Pharisee, was declared righteous by God.

Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector, wanted to see

Jesus who was passing by. Since he couldn't see over the crowd, he ran ahead and climbed a tree. Coming to that spot, Jesus looked up and said, Zacchaeus, come down, for I must stay at your house today. He said, If I've defrauded anyone, I'll pay him back four times what I wrongfully collected. Jesus said, Today salvation has come to this house.

When Jesus ascended to the Father, his disciples were continually in the temple praising God.

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Matthew

To Joseph, God said, Mary your fiancée is pregnant by the Holy Spirit. When he's born, name him Jesus, for he'll save his people.

Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem looking for the newborn king of the Jews. This news made Herod the king very angry. He learned that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. To the wise men, he said, Find him and come back and tell me where he is so I can go and worship him. Finding him, they gave him gifts. They were told not to return to Herod.

To Joseph, the Lord's angel said, Since Herod wants to kill him, take the child and flee to Egypt. Stay there until you hear that Herod is dead.

Realizing that the wise men had tricked him, Herod ordered the deaths of the male children two years old and younger in Bethlehem and the surrounding region.

To Joseph, the Lord's angel said, Since those who wanted to kill the child are dead, take him and his mother to Nazareth in Galilee.

To the people, John preached repentance. When they confessed their sins, he immersed them in the Jordan River. When Jesus came to be immersed, John said, I ought to be immersed by you. When Jesus said, This is God's will, John immersed

him. When God's spirit came down on him as slowly as a dove descends, a voice from heaven said, This is my dear Son who pleases me greatly.

The spirit led Jesus to the desert where he was tested by the devil. Since Jesus was hungry after fasting forty days, the devil said, Make bread from these stones. Jesus said, God's Word not bread gives spiritual life. Taking him to the highest point of the temple, the devil said, If you jump, God will catch you. Jesus said, You mustn't put the Lord to the test. Taking him to a high mountain, the devil said, If you'll worship me, I'll give you the kingdoms of the world. Jesus said, God is the only one you must worship.

When Jesus saw Simon and Andrew throwing a net in the lake, he said, Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. Seeing James and John in a boat with Zebedee their father, he said, Follow me.

Fortunate are those who have a humble spirit, for they'll let me rule their lives. Fortunate are those who feel remorse for their sins, for God will comfort them. Fortunate are the patient and mild, for this shows that God is in control of their lives. Fortunate are those who yearn for God's right action in their lives, for God will satisfy their desire. Fortunate are those who show others mercy, for God will show them mercy. Fortunate are the pure

in heart, for they'll see God. Fortunate are those who make peace, for God will call them his sons. Fortunate are those whom people persecute for doing what's right, for this shows that God is in control of their lives. You're fortunate when people insult you, persecute you, and say evil things against you because of me. Rejoice for your heavenly reward is great. In the same way, they persecuted the prophets who came before you.

You're the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Do your good deeds before people so they'll praise your Heavenly Father.

I came to complete the Law and the prophets. The Law is to be observed until I come and establish the new order. If your righteousness doesn't exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you can't enter the heavenly kingdom.

If you remember your brother has something against you when you're about to offer your gift on the altar, be reconciled with him. Then offer your gift. Come to a quick understanding when your opponent is taking you to court. If you don't, he'll turn you over to the judge who'll hand you over to the officer who'll throw you in jail.

You've been told that he who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce, but I say he

who divorces his wife for any reason other than marital unfaithfulness makes her commit adultery.

You've been told to keep the oaths you make to the Lord, but I say you mustn't swear at all.

You've been told to treat a man like he treats you, but I say you must show your opponent that you have no desire to strike back.

You've been told to love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say love your enemy and pray for him who persecutes you.

When you pray, say, Heavenly Father, may your name be treated with respect. May your kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Each day give us the bread we need. Forgive wrongs we do to others as we forgive wrongs others do to us. Don't put us to the test, but rescue us from the devil.

When you fast, let it be between you and God. Don't advertise it like the hypocrites who want men to praise them for fasting.

Store up eternal treasures in heaven, for your heart will be where your treasure is.

Just as no one can be a slave to two owners, he can't be a slave to God and money.

God who gives you your material needs will also give you your spiritual needs.

If you treat people the way you want them to

treat you, you've fulfilled the Law and the prophets.

Many travel the road to destruction, but few travel the road to life. He who obeys my Heavenly Father's commands will enter the heavenly kingdom.

He who obeys these words will have eternal life.

The people were amazed at Jesus' teaching, for he taught them with authority unlike their scribes.

To Jesus, a Roman centurion said, Say the word and my lame son will be healed. He said, I haven't found such faith in Israel.

When Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law who had a fever, she got out of bed and served them food.

Someone said, Before I follow you, let me bury my father. Jesus said, Let the dead bury their dead.

During a severe storm, the disciples woke Jesus and said, Lord, we're about to drown. When he told the wind to stop blowing, they were amazed.

When Jesus let many demons go out of two men into some pigs, the herd ran over the cliff and drowned in the lake. People from the nearby city asked Jesus to leave their region.

When Jesus told a paralyzed man to get up, take his mat, and go home, the people praised God.

When the Pharisees criticized Jesus for eating with a tax collector whom they considered a sinner, Jesus said, I came to call sinners.

When they asked Jesus why his disciples didn't fast, he said, They'll fast when I'm taken from them.

The old order that came before me isn't compatible with the new order I'm introducing.

While Jesus was on his way to heal a rabbi's daughter, a woman who'd been hemorrhaging twelve years touched the fringe of his cloak from behind. He turned and said, Daughter, your faith has healed you. When he healed the rabbi's daughter, the news spread throughout the land.

When Jesus expelled a demon, the people said, Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel.

To be his twelve apostles, Jesus chose Simon Peter, Andrew his brother, James and John, Zebedee's sons, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him. Jesus said, Go only to the lost people of Israel and say the heavenly kingdom is near. When they persecute you in one city, flee to the next. The Son of Man will come before you visit all the cities of Israel.

When John who was in prison heard what Je-

sus was doing, he sent disciples to say, Are you the coming one? Jesus said, Tell John the blind can see, the lame can walk, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised, and the humble hear the good news. John is the greatest man who ever lived, but he's the least in the heavenly kingdom. When John came neither eating nor drinking, they said, He's crazy. When the Son of Man came eating and drinking, they said, He's a glutton, a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners.

Jesus said, I'll show greater tolerance for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom than I'll show for Corazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum where I performed great miracles.

When Jesus' disciples rubbed wheat heads in their hands and ate the grain, the Pharisees said, This is a violation of our Sabbath rules. Jesus said, Since I'm the Lord of the Sabbath, I'll decide what ought to be done on the Sabbath.

When Jesus knew the Jews were watching to see if he would heal on the Sabbath, he said, If your sheep falls in the ditch on the Sabbath, won't you lift it out? A man is much more important than a sheep.

When the Pharisees said, He expels demons by the ruler of the demons, Jesus said, By whom do your disciples expel them? When you say evil

things about the Holy Spirit, you commit the only sin God won't forgive.

When Jesus fed five thousand people from five loaves and two fish, the people wanted to make him king. Telling his disciples to go by boat to the other side of the lake, he went up a mountain to pray.

When Jesus came toward them walking on the storm-tossed waters, his disciples thought he was a ghost. When he got in the boat, the wind stopped. They said, You're truly God's Son.

Pharisees and Scribes asked Jesus why his disciples didn't observe the ritual of washing their hands before they ate. He said, Why don't you observe the law that requires you to support your parents? You tell them that the money you owe them is set aside for religious purposes.

When a Gentile woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter, he said, It's not right to throw the children's bread to dogs. She said, The dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their owner's table. He said, Because of your great faith, I'm going to heal your daughter.

To his disciples, Jesus said, Whom do people say I am? They said, People say you're John or Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said, Whom do you say I am? Peter said, You're the

Christ the Son of the living God. He said, You're a building stone and on this foundation of faith which you've just confessed I'll build my church.

I must go up to Jerusalem where I'll be treated with contempt by the elders, chief priests, and scribes. I'll be killed, but on the third day, I'll be raised from the dead. Some of you will be living when the Son of Man comes in his kingdom.

On a high mountain, Jesus' appearance was changed and he talked with Moses and Elijah. To the three disciples who were with him, he said, Wait until the Son of Man is raised from the dead before you tell anyone about this.

Peter said, Must I forgive my brother seven times? Jesus said, You must forgive your brother as often as he asks.

It's as impossible for a man who's wedded to his riches to enter heaven as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a sewing needle.

The heavenly kingdom is like a vineyard owner who went out early in the morning to hire workers. Finding some at the market, he agreed to pay them a day's wage. At the third hour, he found others and said, Go work in my vineyard and I'll pay you what's right. Going out about the sixth and ninth hours, he did the same. Going out about the eleventh hour, he found some waiting to be hired.

He said, Go and work in the vineyard. At the end of the day, the owner said to his paymaster, Pay them all a day's wage beginning with the last to arrive. This made the first to arrive think they would get more. When they got their pay, they said to the owner, You've paid those who worked only an hour what you paid us who worked all day in the hot sun. The owner said, You agreed to work for a day's wage. Take your pay and don't come back. This shows that God wants people who love the work to be permanent workers in the kingdom.

To two of his disciples, Jesus said, Go to the next village where you'll find a donkey and her colt. Untie them and bring them to me. When they put their cloaks on the colt, Jesus mounted it. People in front and behind were giving Jesus a kingly welcome.

Jesus entered the temple compound and expelled the sellers and the buyers. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and dove sellers. He said, My house shall be called a house of prayer.

The chief priests and elders said, By whose authority are you doing these things? He said, Was John's immersion ministry from God or men? They said, We don't know. He said, Since you didn't answer my question, I won't answer yours.

Some Pharisees and Herodians said, Should

we pay taxes to Caesar? When they showed him a silver coin used to pay the tax, he said, Whose image and inscription are these? They said, Caesar's. He said, Give to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what belongs to Him.

Scribes and Pharisees, you travel sea and land to make one convert to Judaism and you make him twice the son of hell you are. You tithe mint, dill, and cummin, but you ignore the more important things of the Law, like judgment, mercy, and faith. On the outside you appear to be righteous, but within you're full of wickedness. You build the tombs of the prophets your ancestors killed. Finish what your fathers began.

As they were leaving the temple, Jesus' disciples spoke about the beauty of the buildings. He said, No stone will remain on top of another. When you hear rumors of wars, don't be alarmed, for the end is yet to come. Kingdom will war against kingdom. This is only the beginning of the messianic woes. When you see the Roman commander standing in the temple, flee to the mountains. There has never been or ever will be such suffering. The Son of Man will come when no one expects him. This generation won't pass away before this happens.

While they were eating the Passover, Jesus took a loaf of bread, thanked God for it, broke it in

pieces, and gave them to his disciples. He said, This bread represents my body. He took a cup, thanked God for it, and gave it to his disciples. He said, This cup represents my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. When they sang a hymn, they left.

When Jesus said, Tonight all of you will desert me, Peter said, I'll never desert you. Jesus said, Tonight before the rooster crows, you'll deny me three times.

When Jesus came to terms with his imminent death, Judas came with a large group from the chief priests and elders and they arrested Jesus, who said, Daily I taught in the temple but you didn't arrest me.

When Jesus was brought before the council the high priest said, Are you the Christ, God's Son? Jesus said, I am. The council sentenced him to death.

When a female slave saw Peter in the high priest's courtyard, she said, You were with Jesus. Peter said, I don't know the man.

When another female slave said, You were with him, Peter said, I don't know the man. They said, Since you're a Galilean, you must be one of his disciples. Peter said, I don't know the man. When a rooster crowed, Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Knowing that Jesus had been condemned, Ju-

das said, I've betrayed innocent blood. When the chief priests and elders refused to take back the thirty silver coins, Judas threw them in the temple, went away, and hanged himself.

When the chief priests and elders brought Jesus in chains to Pilate, the Roman governor, they accused him of many things. Pilate was amazed that Jesus didn't defend himself against their accusations. Pilate said, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus said, I am. When Pilate let the people choose between Jesus and Barrabas who had been arrested while revolting against Rome, he said, What shall I do with Jesus? They said, Crucify him. Afraid the crowd would riot, Pilate handed Jesus over to his soldiers to be whipped with the cat-o'-nine-tails and crucified. They put a purple cape around his shoulders and put a crown of thorns on his head. When they put a staff in his hand, they mockingly bowed before him, spit on him, and hit him on the head with the staff.

The loss of blood from the whipping with the cat-o'-nine-tails left Jesus in a weakened condition. The soldiers commandeered someone to carry his cross. They crucified him on a hill that looked like a skull. He refused to drink the pain killer they offered him. The soldiers cast lots for his seamless undergarment. Above his head a sign identified him

as Jesus, the king of the Jews. Two robbers were crucified with him. Everyone was hurling insults at him.

When Jesus gave a shout of victory and died, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. When the tombs were opened by an earthquake, many dead bodies of the saints were raised. The Roman guards said, Surely he was God's Son.

With Pilate's permission, Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linen strips, put it in his new tomb hewn out of rock, rolled a large stone in front of the tomb, and left.

An angel rolled back the stone and sat on it. When two women arrived, he said, Jesus has been raised from the dead. Come and see where he lay. As they were leaving, Jesus appeared to them and said, Tell my disciples I'll see them in Galilee.

Jesus said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given me. Go and make disciples among the Gentiles. Immerse them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teach them what I've commanded you and I'll be with you to the end of the age.

John

Before he spoke the world into existence, Jesus Christ was with God his Father. He had the power of life and light. Those who believed in him became God's children. Moses gave us the Law, but Jesus Christ gave us grace and truth.

When John introduced Jesus to his disciples, two of them followed him. Andrew found Simon his brother and said, We've found the Christ. When Jesus saw him, he said, You're Simon, but I'll call you Peter, which means rock.

To Philip, Jesus said, Follow me. Philip found Nathanael and said, We've found Jesus about whom Moses and the prophets wrote. To Nathanael, Jesus said, You're a true Israelite. Nathanael said, How do you know me? Jesus said, Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree. Nathanael said, Teacher, you're God's Son and Israel's King.

At a wedding feast, Jesus' mother said, We're out of wine. He said, I'm not here to solve that problem. To the servants, she said, Do what he tells you. Jesus said, Draw water from the well and fill the six water tubs on the outside of the house. On arrival the guests had used water from these tubs to ceremonially wash their feet. Then Jesus said, Draw water from the well and take it to the one in

charge of the feast. When they arrived, the water had become wine. The one in charge said, This is the best wine I've ever tasted. This is the way Jesus showed his disciples that he, not ceremonial Judaism, is the only one who can give eternal life.

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus and said, Teacher, we know you've come from God. Jesus said, To enter God's kingdom, you must be born from above.

In Samaria, Jesus sat beside Jacob's well while his disciples went to buy bread. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, he asked her for a drink. This surprised her, for she knew that Jews didn't socialize with Samaritans. He said, I can give you life-giving water. She said, Give me this water. He said, Call your husband. She said, I don't have a husband. He said, You've lived with several men outside of marriage. She said, You're a prophet. When his disciples returned, they were amazed to find him talking with a woman. She was in such a hurry to get away she left the water jar behind. She said, Come and see a man who told me everything I've done. His disciples said, Teacher, eat. He said, My food is to finish the work of him who sent me. When the people heard Jesus speak, they said, He's truly the world's Savior.

God has given his Son power to give life. As

the Son of Man, he has authority to judge everyone. You think eternal life is in the Scriptures, but they only tell you what you need to know about me.

I'm the bread of life. I've come down from heaven to do the will of Him who sent me. He who believes in the Son has eternal life. You don't know where I came from or Him who sent me. In a little while, I'll go to Him who sent me. You Jews can't come where I'll be.

When they brought a woman caught committing adultery, they said, The Law requires us to stone such women. Stooping down, Jesus wrote something in the dust of the temple pavement. He said, Let him who's without sin throw the first stone. To the woman, he said, Has no one condemned you? When she said no, he said, Neither do I. Go and stop sinning.

He who follows me will never walk in darkness, for I'm the light of the world.

Your father Abraham was glad to see my day. They said, How could you have seen Abraham? He said, Before Abraham was, I am.

When Jesus healed a blind man on the Sabbath, the Jews were divided. Some said, He's crazy. Others said, A crazy man can't open the eyes of the blind, can he?

When Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha

died, Jews came from Jerusalem to console them. After Jesus had spoken with Martha, he asked to see Mary. Jesus said, Where have you buried Lazarus? When he raised him from the dead, some of the Jews believed. Those who didn't went back to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

After he raised Lazarus, he was a guest in his home. Mary anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair. When Judas objected to what he called a waste of perfume, he said it could've been sold and the money given to the poor. Judas carried the money bag and he wanted the money for himself. Jesus said, You'll always have the poor, but you won't always have me.

You must love one another as I've loved you. I've chosen you to be kingdom men. After I'm gone, I'll send the Holy Spirit who'll lead you to the whole truth. My father will give you anything you ask in my name.

As he was dying on the cross, Jesus said, It's finished. When a Roman soldier thrust his spear in his side, blood and water symbols of life gushed out. Since Jesus was dead, they didn't break his bones.

Hearing that Jesus had risen, Peter and John ran to the tomb. John got there first but didn't enter

the tomb. Peter went right on in. When John entered, he knew that Jesus had risen from the dead.

For fear of the Jews, the disciples except Thomas were hiding in a room with the door barred. Jesus appeared and showed them his hands and side. He said, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they must have been forgiven by God.

Thomas wouldn't believe that they had seen the Lord. When Jesus appeared, he said, Touch my hands and put your hand in my side. Thomas said, My Lord and my God. Jesus said, Fortunate are those who believe without seeing me.

John has written these words and we know his testimony is true. He wants people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son.

Acts

When Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit. They watched him ascend to heaven and returned to Jerusalem.

Peter said, We must select someone to take Judas' place. They chose Matthias.

On the day of Pentecost, a loud sound filled the house where they were staying. They spoke a language unknown to them. People from everywhere had come for the feast. They heard what was said in the language of their own country. Peter said, What the Lord has promised has happened this day. To show that their sins had been forgiven, those who believed were immersed in water. About three thousand were added to their number. They shared what they had.

When Peter healed a crippled beggar, the people were amazed. Peter said, Faith in Jesus has healed this man. The number of believers grew to about five thousand. The Jewish council charged him to stop speaking in the name of Jesus. Peter said, I must speak what I've seen and heard.

People with property sold their lands and gave the money to the apostles who divided it among the needy. Ananias sold some property. Keeping some for himself, he gave the rest to the apostles as

if it were the whole amount. When Peter said, You lied to God, Ananias fell down dead. When Sapphira his wife came, Peter said, Is this all you got from the sale of the property? She said, yes. Peter said, You've lied like your husband. When she fell down dead, they took her out and buried her with her husband.

The high priest became jealous of Peter and the others for winning many people to Christ. When they were put in jail, an angel opened the doors and led them out. They went to the temple and taught the people about Jesus. When the temple captain came to the jail to take the prisoners before the council, they found the jail empty. Someone said, The men you want are in the temple teaching the people. The temple guard brought them to the council. The high priest said, You've filled Jerusalem with your teaching. Peter said, We must obey God, not men.

When the widows who spoke Greek said they were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food, Peter said, Our job is to preach God's good news. Choose seven men full of the spirit and wisdom and we'll appoint them to take care of this matter. Stephen one of the seven performed great signs among the people. When the Jews couldn't stand up to the wisdom of his words, they bribed

men to say, We've heard him say evil thing against Moses and God. The high priest said, How do you plead to these charges? When Stephen told them that they had always resisted God's will, they took him outside the city and stoned him. They laid their cloaks at the feet of Saul who applauded Stephen's death. When the Jews launched an all-out attack on the Jerusalem church, all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

When Philip one of the seven went to Samaria and performed signs and healed many people, many believed in Jesus. When Peter and John laid their hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit.

Philip preached the good news about Jesus to an Ethiopian eunuch who believed and was immersed in water.

As Saul drew near Damascus to put in chains anyone he found following the way, he was engulfed with a bright light and fell to the ground. A voice said, I'm Jesus whom you're persecuting. Go to Damascus and you'll be told what to do. Since the bright light had made Saul blind, he was led to the city. When he regained his sight, he told the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. When he came to Jerusalem, the brothers sent him to Tarsus.

Having learned that God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile, Peter preached the Christ

in the home of a Roman centurion. The believers received the Holy Spirit.

Hearing that the Gentiles in Antioch had believed in Jesus, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to check it out.

Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. When they came to Antioch. They took financial aid to their brothers in Judea.

Taking John Mark with them, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch. The Holy Spirit said, Set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I've called them. Taking John Mark with them, they came to Seleucia and sailed to Cyprus where they preached the good news in Salamis. Crossing the island, they came to Paphos where they met a Roman proconsul who wanted to hear the good news. When a Jewish false prophet opposed him, Saul, also called Paul, said, God will strike you blind. When the proconsul saw it happen, he believed.

When they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark returned to Jerusalem. When they were forced out of Antioch of Pisidia, they came to Iconium where the Jews threatened to stone them. When they came to Lystra, Paul healed a cripple. Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuaded the Jews in Lystra to stone Paul. Paul got up and returned to the city. When they came to Derbe, many

people believed. When they returned to Antioch, they said God has opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Some Pharisee believers from Jerusalem came to Antioch and said that the Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders about this matter. To the believers that insisted the Gentiles obey the Mosaic Law, Peter said, You want to lay on the Gentiles a burden that our fathers or we haven't been able to bear. We believe that Jew and Gentile are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus. James said, We won't bother those Gentiles who've turned to the Lord. We'll write and ask them to stop eating anything sacrificed to idols and meat of strangled animals, and to stop committing sexual immorality. Judas and Silas who were chosen to carry the letter went with Paul and Barnabas when they returned to Antioch.

To Barnabas, Paul said, Let's return to the churches where we preached and see how they're doing. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul opposed it. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas and they went to Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches. In Lystra they found a believer named Timothy. His mother was a faithful Jewish woman. His father was a

highly regarded Gentile. Paul, Silas, and Timothy came to Troas where Paul had a vision of a man who said, Come over to Macedonia and help us. We found Lydia at a place of prayer outside Philippi. When she believed, we stayed in her house.

When Paul expelled an evil spirit from a slave girl who told fortunes, her owners dragged Paul and Silas before the officials who ordered them beaten with rods and put in jail. An earthquake jarred the prison doors open. When the jailer saw the prison doors open, he thought the prisoners had escaped. When he was going to kill himself, Paul said, Don't harm yourself, for all of us are here. When the jailer said, what must I do to be saved? Paul said, You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When the officials sent word to release them, Paul said, As Roman citizens, we should have been given a trial. Let them come and escort us out.

In Thessalonica, Paul preached the good news to the Jews. When they stirred up trouble for Paul, he came to Berea where the Jews were more receptive to his preaching. When the Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred up trouble, the brothers sent Paul to the coast while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea.

At Athens, Paul preached to Jews and Gentiles. He said, The God I preach doesn't live in temples, but He's the Lord of heaven and earth. He's been raised from the dead. Only a few believed in Jesus.

At Corinth, Paul found Aquila and Priscilla his wife. They and all other Jews had been expelled from Rome by Claudius. Like them Paul was a tentmaker. He worked with them and stayed in their home.

When Silas and Timothy arrived, Paul had left the obstinate Jews and was preaching to the Gentiles. Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila came to Ephesus. Paul promised to return and left for Antioch in Syria. Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus. They found Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, in Egypt. He was a good preacher using the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Christ. He knew nothing about the public ministry of Jesus. He knew only about John's ministry. Priscilla and Aquila told him about immersion in the Holy Spirit. When he came to Corinth, he preached the good news about Jesus.

When Paul returned to Ephesus, he told those who had been converted by Apollos to receive the Holy Spirit. When he said gods made by hand are no gods at all, he was opposed by Demetrius who made miniature temples of Artemis, the goddess of

the Ephesians. When the people rose up in revolt, the city clerk said, We're in danger of being charged with creating a riot and we wouldn't be able to justify this disorderly assembly.

After Paul stayed three months in Greece, he came to Troas. Planning to leave the next day, Paul preached until midnight. Wanting to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost, Paul had the Ephesian church elders meet him at Miletus. He said, None of you will see me again. With tears in their eyes they escorted Paul to his ship.

When Paul came to Jerusalem, the brothers received him joyfully. Paul told them what God had done among the Gentiles. A riot broke out when it was falsely reported that Paul had taken a Gentile into the temple. When the Roman tribune came, he ordered Paul taken to his barracks and whipped with the cat-o'-nine-tails. Paul said, Is it lawful to whip a Roman who hasn't been tried? The tribune said, I paid a lot of money to become a Roman. Paul said, I was born a Roman.

Unsure of the charges against Paul, the tribune sent him to Felix the Roman governor who resided in Caesarea. When Felix was succeeded by Festus, he left him in prison as a favor to the Jews. When Festus said, Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and be judged by me? Paul said, I appeal to Caesar.

On his way to Rome, Paul was put in the custody of Julius, a Roman centurion.

After a disastrous shipwreck on the island of Malta, we finally came to Rome where Paul was allowed to live in a house at his own expense. No one stopped him from preaching about Jesus Christ.

Galatians

Paul to the churches of the Roman province of Galatia: Grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

I persecuted God's church without mercy. I was extremely zealous for our fathers' traditions. When God called me to preach to the Gentiles, I went to Arabia and returned to Damascus. Three years later I visited Peter in Jerusalem and stayed with him fifteen days. I was still unknown to the churches in Judea. Fourteen years later I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus. The church leaders didn't compel Titus a Gentile to be circumcised. Peter preached to the circumcised Jews, and I preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles.

When Peter came to Antioch, he ate with the Gentiles. When some brothers came down from Jerusalem, he stopped eating with them. I said, Peter, you're a hypocrite. We Jews who follow Christ know that no one is declared righteous by doing what the Law requires.

When Christ died on the cross, he freed us from the curse of the Law. Before Christ came, God gave the Law to curb the people's sins. Since God sent his Son to release you from the slavery of the Law, how can you turn again to powerless false

gods? Loving your neighbor is what the Law is about. You're not obligated to do what the Law requires.

The Judaizers boast about their circumcision, but I boast about the cross of Jesus Christ. Those who live in peace and show mercy are God's true Israel. May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

First Thessalonians

Paul and Timothy to the church in Thessalonica:
Grace and peace from God our Father.

You've become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. You've turned from idols to serve the living God. You're expecting God's Son to come from heaven and deliver us from the coming wrath.

When we came from Philippi where we'd been persecuted and insulted, you gave us a good reception. We preached God's good news and worked night and day so we wouldn't be a burden to you. When Jesus our Lord comes, you'll be our glory and joy. May God our Father and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you. When Jesus comes with all his saints, we want you to be strong, blameless, and holy.

Stop committing sexual immorality. Live quietly. Go about your business. Respect those who labor among you. Be at peace with one another. Rejoice always and pray continually. Stop suppressing the Holy Spirit. Abstain from every kind of evil. The God of peace will make you completely holy. Keep on praying for us.

Greet all the believers with a brotherly kiss. May the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.

Second Thessalonians

Paul, Silas, and Timothy to the church in Thessalonica: Grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

In all the churches, we boast about your patience and love. When Jesus our Lord comes from heaven, he'll punish those who persecute you. Let God complete his work of faith so the name of Jesus will be praised.

The Jewish revolt must take place before the wicked destroyer is revealed. Saying he's God, he'll take his seat in God's temple. God will destroy him. Satan will perform false miracles, signs, wonders, and every kind of wicked deception.

The spirit has called you to receive Jesus Christ's glory. May Jesus Christ comfort your hearts and establish you in every good deed and word.

We ate no bread without paying for it. Let no one eat who doesn't work. Let the idle go to work and earn their bread.

The grace of Jesus Christ be with you all.

First Corinthians

Paul and Sosthenes to the believers in Corinth:
Grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus
Christ our Lord.

We preach Christ crucified an insult to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. God's foolishness is wiser and his weakness is stronger than men. God chose the world's foolish things to shame the wise and the weak things to shame the strong. You've been given life by Christ Jesus our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

We preach about God's secret wisdom the world has never known. What eye has never seen and ear has never heard God has prepared for those who love him. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can tell us about God.

Stop choosing between Apollos and me. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave you life. Apollos and I are on the same team. We're teachers through whom you've believed.

I hear that a man is living with his father's wife. I've never heard of such sexual immorality among the Gentiles. Hand him over to Satan so his flesh can be destroyed but his spirit can be saved. Remove that wicked man.

Settle your disputes within your church fam-

ily. If you air them in public, you lose your influence in the community.

He who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Since you've been bought with a price, glorify God in your bodies.

The unmarried and widows would do well to stay unmarried. If they can't control their sexual desires, let them marry. If a woman has an unbelieving husband who's willing to live with her, she mustn't divorce him. Let the unbeliever who wants to leave go. The married man wants to please his wife. The unmarried man wants to please the Lord. The world we live in will soon be gone. I want you to wait for the Lord without the world's distractions.

I refuse to be paid for preaching the good news. I would rather die than have someone deprive me of this boast. I'm fully rewarded when I preach without charge.

If you accept an unbeliever's invitation to dine, eat what he serves. If a believer says this meat has been sacrificed to idols, stop eating it.

A woman should cover her head as a symbol of her husband's authority. It's a disgrace for a man to wear long hair. The woman ought to cover her long hair, which is her glory.

Love is patient and kind. It isn't envious, boastful, or arrogant. It doesn't get angry, keep a list of wrongs, or rejoice in wickedness. It rejoices in the truth, endures everything, and looks on the bright side. It never ends. Prophecy will cease, tongues will become silent, and knowledge will pass away. When that which is perfect comes, the imperfect will be abolished. Faith, hope, and love will remain. The greatest of these is love.

Speaking in unknown languages is a sign to unbelievers. Preaching is for believers. God is a God of peace. Be eager to preach, but don't forbid anyone from speaking in an unknown language. Let everything be done in a proper and orderly way.

Christ died for our sins and was raised on the third day. After he appeared to Peter and the other apostles, he appeared to James. He appeared to more than five hundred brothers, most of whom are still alive. After he ascended to heaven, he appeared to me the least of the apostles.

When Christ comes, he'll destroy the powers that oppose God's will. When God has put everything under His Son, His Son will put himself under God. When we die, we'll be changed. Mortality will put on immortality. Death will be swallowed up in victory.

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca and the church that meets in their home greet you. Greet one another with a brotherly kiss. The grace of Jesus our Lord be with you.

Second Corinthians

Paul to the church in Corinth and all the saints in the Roman province of Achaia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

The old covenant was about the Law. The new covenant is about the spirit. The Law kills but the spirit gives life. The Lord's spirit frees us from the Law.

We face physical death so you may have spiritual life. Our light momentary affliction prepares us for eternal glory. What can be seen is temporary, but what can't be seen is eternal. When our physical body is destroyed, we'll have a spiritual body in heaven. God has given the spirit as a guarantee of life after death. When one is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old is gone and the new has come.

Titus told me about his pleasant visit with you. I was glad I had boasted to him about you. He has great affection for you. I'm glad I can have complete confidence in you.

The churches of Macedonia have given a generous contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Your generosity will gladden the hearts of the Jerusalem brothers.

I'm in no way inferior to those you call super apostles. I'm just as much a Hebrew as they are. I've

worked harder, have been in more prisons, and have been beaten more severely. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. I've spent sleepless nights. I've been hungry and thirsty. With very little clothing, I've been exposed to cold weather. When I asked the Lord to heal an eye disease, he said, My grace is all you need. As my weakness grows, my power increases.

Be at peace and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a brotherly kiss. May Christ's grace be with you all.

Romans

Paul to the believers in Rome: May you have grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus Christ is able to save everyone who believes in him. The righteous will live by faith. The unrighteous die in their unbelief.

No one will be declared righteous for doing what the Law requires. The Law reveals our sin. When God let former sins go unpunished, he revealed his patience. When He declares believers to be righteous, He reveals His mercy. The Just demands of the Law are met only by believers. The believer's faith is credited as righteousness.

Affliction brings patience that brings character that brings hope. We were reconciled to God through his Son's death on the cross. Adam's disobedience brought death. Jesus Christ's death brought eternal life. Stop letting sin use your bodies for wickedness and let God use them for righteousness. Since you've been set free from sin and have come under God's control, you can live holy lives.

Since God is for us, who can be against us? Nothing can separate us from God's love that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I weep for my people whom God has given the

Law and the promise. I pray for the salvation of my people. God hasn't rejected his people. He's sent me to you Gentiles to make them jealous. God will make a new covenant with them.

Hate the evil and be devoted to the good. Show compassion and respect for one another. Keep on being a slave to the Lord. Be devoted to prayer. Contribute to the saints' needs. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who're sad. Stop doing evil things to those who've done evil things to you. Try to live in peace with everyone. Leave vengeance to God. If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him a drink. When someone does something mean to you, do something nice to him.

Submit to those who govern you, for God has given them their authority. Rulers are a threat only to those who do evil. Do what's right and they'll praise you. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law.

Don't eat meat you know has been sacrificed to idols. You must abstain from eating meat and drinking wine when it causes your brother to sin.

The good news has spread from Jerusalem to Illyricum. I hope to see you on my way to Spain and enjoy your company. I'm taking money to the poor saints in Jerusalem. I'm looking forward to

seeing you. I know that Christ will bless my coming. I hope to find joy and rest with you. May our God's peace be with you all. Amen.

Ephesians

(These greetings were sent with a copy of Paul's letter to the Romans.)

Welcome Phoebe our sister and take care of her needs. Greet Prisca and Aquila who risked their lives for me. Greet the church that meets in their home. Greet Epaenetus the first Asian to believe in Christ. Greet Mary who's a hard worker. Greet Andronicus and Junias who've been in prison with me. They were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, Urbanus, and Stachys. Greet Apelles and the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion and the household of Narcissus. Greet Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis, women who've served the Lord well. Greet Rufus and his mother. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, and all the saints with them.

I want you to be wise about the good and innocent about the evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Timothy, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater greet you. I Tertius, the Amanuensis of this letter, greet you. Gaius my host and the church that meets in his home greet you. Erastus the city treasurer and Quartus his brother greet you.

God will be with you as you preach the good news and reveal the secret now made known to the Gentiles. Through Jesus Christ, may God be praised forever and ever. Amen.

Philippians

Paul and Timothy to the church in Philippi: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

My imprisonment has brought about the spread of the good news throughout the Roman emperor's palace. Stand firm in the faith. Stop being afraid of those who oppose you. You'll be saved and they'll be destroyed.

Treat others like they're better than you. Look out for their interest. Christ Jesus didn't think equality with God was something to hang on to. Since he was willing to die on the cross, God gave him a name above every name. Every tongue will acknowledge that he's Lord.

Do everything with a cheerful disposition. Be innocent and blameless children of God among a crooked and perverted generation. It's a pleasure to give my life's blood in the service of your faith.

Timothy is like a son to me. I'll send him as soon as I know my fate. When Epaphroditus, whom you sent to take care of my needs, almost died, God had mercy on him and spared me much grief.

Watch out for those Jewish Christians who want to circumcise all Gentile Christians. I've more reason to boast. I was circumcised on the eighth

day. I belong to the tribe of Benjamin. I'm a Pharisee. I've persecuted the church. I used to practice all the rules of the rabbis. Christ, not the law, declares me righteous. When Christ comes from heaven, he'll subject everything to himself.

You were the only church that helped me in a time of need. Since Epaphroditus brought me your gift, I've more than I need. May God our Father be praised forever and ever. Amen.

Greet all the saints. Those in Caesar's household greet you. May our gracious Lord be with you in spirit.

Colossians

Paul and Timothy to the church in Colossae: Grace and peace from God our Father.

I've heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all the saints. We learned it from Epaphras who first preached the good news to you.

Before he created the world, Christ was with God. Through his blood God reconciled everything to himself.

I work hard for you and those in Laodicea. Neither you nor they have ever seen my face. I want you to have the treasures of wisdom hidden in Christ. Let no one deceive you with persuasive speech. I'm glad to know that you're standing firm in your faith in Christ.

Christ circumcised you when he cut you away from yourself. On the cross, he won the victory over rulers and authorities. He exposed them for what they were.

Since you've given up Jewish ritual, why do you still submit to its rules? These harsh treatments of the body can't stop sexual immorality.

Wives, submit to your husbands. Husbands, love your wives. Children, obey your parents. Fathers, stop provoking your children. Slaves, obey your human owners. Slave owners, treat your slaves with respect. Live wisely before outsiders.

I'm sending Tychicus and Onesimus a member of your church. Epaphras is very concerned about you brothers in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. When you've read this letter, let the Laodicean church read it and read the letter I've written them.

Remember my chains. Grace be with you all.

Laodiceans

(Erroneously called Ephesians)

Paul to the church in Laodicea: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

I've heard about your faith and your love for all the saints. God has put Christ over all rulers, authorities, and powers. He's the ruler of this and the coming age. You've been saved by grace through faith. Jesus has reconciled Jew and Gentile to God. You're now members of God's family.

I've been given the privilege to preach the good news about Christ's incomprehensible riches. I pray that you may be able to comprehend the extent of Christ's love that surpasses all understanding.

God has made some apostles, some preachers, some pastors, and some teachers. The church is held together by the unity of its members. It grows in love.

Be kind to one another. Forgive one another as Christ has forgiven you. Stop committing sexual immorality. Before Christ comes, make the best use of your time, for the days are evil.

Husbands, love your wives as you love yourself. Wives, respect your husbands. Children, obey your parents. Fathers stop making unfair demands

on your children. Slaves, obey and respect your worldly owners. Slave owners, stop threatening your slaves. Remember that God is your spiritual owner.

Buckle the belt of truth around your waist and put on the breastplate of righteousness. Put shoes on your feet so you can preach about peace. Use the shield of faith to ward off the flaming arrows of the evil. Put on the helmet of salvation and the sword of God's word. I'm God's representative in chains. Pray that I may preach the good news about Christ.

Tychicus will tell you what's happening to me in Rome. Grace to you who love Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Timothy

Paul to Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Law was made for the disobedient, not the righteous. Christ Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. He made me an apostle to faithfully and truthfully teach the Gentiles.

A woman must dress modestly and decently. She mustn't braid her hair. She must adorn herself with good deeds. I don't allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man.

A pastor must have no more than one wife. He must be sober, thoughtful, honorable, hospitable, and a skilled teacher. He mustn't be addicted to wine or a bully. He must be kind and peaceable. He mustn't be greedy. His children must obey him. He mustn't be a new convert. He must have a good reputation among those outside the church.

A deacon must be worthy of respect. He mustn't be addicted to wine or greedy. He must be sober and faithful. He mustn't have more than one wife. He must be able to manage his children.

In the last days, some will abandon their faith. Avoid myths old women like to tell. Let no one look down on you because you're young. Devote yourself to Scripture reading. Stop neglecting the

gift the elders gave you when they laid their hands on you.

Consult an older man as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters. Slaves must treat their owners with respect. The love of money is the root of every kind of evil. Fight the good fight of faith. Guard what God has given you. Abandon empty talk. Grace be with you.

Second Timothy

Paul to Timothy: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I'm in chains for preaching the good news, but the good news can't be put in chains. Flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. The Lord's slave must be gentle, patient, and a skilled teacher.

Before Christ comes there'll be stressful times. Everyone who follows Christ Jesus will be persecuted. When Christ Jesus comes, he'll establish his kingdom. The time for my departure from this life has come. I've fought the good fight. I've finished the course, and I've kept the faith. When the Lord comes, he'll give me a crown of righteousness.

Come to me soon. Only Luke is with me. Greet Prisca and Aquila. All the brothers greet you. Grace be with you.

Titus

Paul to Titus, my true son in the faith: Grace and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

I left you in Crete to appoint elders who must have only one wife and believing children. They must have a good reputation. They mustn't be arrogant or quick to lose their tempers. They must be hospitable and love what's good. They must be thoughtful, righteous, holy, and disciplined. Cretans have a reputation for being liars and lazy gluttons.

We wait for the coming of Christ Jesus our Savior. He gave himself to free us from all wickedness. Stop letting anyone treat you with contempt.

We were born again by the Holy Spirit symbolized by immersion in water. Through Jesus Christ, God poured out His Holy Spirit on us. He graciously declared us righteous and made us heirs of eternal life.

Shun discussions about genealogies. Stop getting into arguments about the Law. See that Zenas the lawyer and Apollos have what they need when you send them on their way. All those with me greet you. Greet the believers there. Grace be with you all.

Philemon

Paul to Philemon: Grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

I've grown very fond of Onesimus your runaway slave, but I'm sending him back to you. Receive him like you'd receive me. Since he ran away with some of your property, I'll repay you. Prepare a guest room for me, for I hope to come to you soon.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke greet you. May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you.

First Peter

Peter to the Jewish exiles scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia:

We're waiting for our salvation to be revealed at the end time. When Christ Jesus comes, we'll praise and honor him. Your faith has filled you with indescribable joy. You've been saved by faith.

Through Christ's blood, you've been freed from your evil ways. God has raised him from the dead and glorified him in heaven.

You're a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. Since Christ suffered, you too will suffer. When they hurled insults at Christ, he didn't hurl them back. He died so our sins might be forgiven. By his wounds we've been healed.

Wives, be submissive to your husbands. Beautify yourselves with a kind and quiet spirit. Husbands, treat your wives with respect. When someone insults you, bless him. It's better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Stop committing sexual immorality and associating with those who do. The end will come soon. Love covers a multitude of sins. May God be praised through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Stop being greedy for money. Stop lording it over those in your care. Be examples to the flock.

When the chief Shepherd comes, you'll receive an immortal crown of glory from God in heaven.

Younger men, be submissive to older men. God opposes the arrogant, but He shows grace to the humble. Throw all your worries on Him, for He cares for you. Be calm and alert. Be steadfast in the faith. God will perfect, establish, and strengthen you. To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Your sister church in Rome and Mark greet you. Greet one another with a brotherly kiss. Peace to you all.

Second Peter

Peter to believers in Jesus Christ:

To be a mature Christian, add to your faith morality, knowledge, discipline, patience, godliness, and love.

Soon I'll be with the Lord in heaven. Remember my teaching when I'm gone.

Be on guard against false teachers who commit sexual immorality and treat the truth with contempt. Their hearts are full of greed, and they boast about their sins. When Jesus comes, he'll destroy them. He'll come unexpectedly and there'll be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness will reign.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. To him be the glory now and forever.

James

James to the twelve tribes scattered among the Gentiles:

He who's tempted is enticed by his own lusts. Lust produces sin and sin produces death. Every good and perfect gift comes down from our Father. With humility, receive the good news about Jesus who can save your souls.

Faith that doesn't have deeds to back it up is no faith at all. Faith without deeds is useless. No one is declared righteous by faith alone. Good deeds show that you have faith. As the body without the spirit is dead, faith without deeds is dead.

The small tongue makes big boasts. The tongue is full of evil. It contaminates the whole body. Man has tamed animals, but he can't tame the tongue. Wisdom from above is pure, peaceful, kind, obedient, merciful, impartial, and sincere. Only those who act peaceably are entitled to peace.

Friendship with the world is enmity with God. Humble yourselves before God, and He'll exalt you. It's a sin when you don't do what you know you ought to do.

The Lord's coming is near. Confess your sins to one another.

Jude

Jude to those who're loved by God our Father and kept safe in Jesus Christ:

Godless men have sneaked in and made God's grace an excuse to commit sexual immorality. They reject God's authority and treat angels with contempt. They live for their evil desires. They speak arrogant words. They flatter people to gain their favor. They follow their ungodly lusts. They cause divisions in the church. Pity the sinner, but hate his sin.

When Jesus our Lord comes, he'll present you blameless to God our Father to whom be glory, majesty, power, and authority forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews

God created the world through his Son who has the same nature as his Father. When the Son shed his blood on the cross, he made it possible for everyone's sins to be forgiven. He sat down at God's right hand.

Jesus came from heaven to be our high priest. Since he learned obedience through suffering, he can sympathize with our weaknesses. Let's come to God's throne and receive mercy and grace.

Jesus is the only one who can give eternal life. The law makes nothing perfect. Christ is the mediator of a better covenant and makes the old one obsolete. The old covenant will be destroyed soon. Christ will come a second time to give salvation to those who wait for him.

The heroes of faith who came before us will be perfected at the same time we are. Let's run the race with patience as we fix our eyes on Jesus, the beginning and end of our faith.

The Lord disciplines all his children so they can share in his holiness. Pursue peace with everyone. Stop committing sexual immorality.

Stop letting money dictate your way of life. Be satisfied with what you have. The Lord will provide your needs. Remember your leaders who preach the good news to you. Pray that I may be re-

stored to you soon. May God perfect you for every good deed so you may do his will through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Please accept my brief letter of encouragement. Timothy has been released. If he comes to you soon, I'll come with him. Greet your leaders and all the saints. Prisca and Aquila greet you. May grace be with you all.

First John

Stop loving the things of this world. It with its lust is passing away. It's the last hour. God will teach you everything you need to know. Jesus is coming soon. We'll be like him when we see him.

Jesus Christ taught us to love one another. He who belongs to God doesn't continue to sin. Since Jesus laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Perfect love removes the fear of punishment. We love God because He first loved us. Everyone who loves the Father loves the Son. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. He who has the Son has eternal life.

Have nothing to do with idols.

Second John

The elder to the church I truly love: grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ, our Father's Son.

Love one another. He who doesn't believe that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is the Antichrist. Hold on to what you've received. Stop having fellowship with anyone who doesn't receive my teaching.

I hope to come to you soon. The brothers of your sister church greet you.

Third John

The elder to Gaius my dear brother, whom I truly love: I pray that you're in good health.

I was glad to hear that you're walking in the truth. Thank you for sending the brothers on their way. When they preached to the Gentiles, they took no money from them.

When I come, Diotrephes who loves to be the church boss will have to answer to me. I remember what he did and said against us. He won't receive the brothers and he puts out of the church those who want to receive them.

He who does good belongs to God. He who does evil has never seen God. I hope to see you soon. Your friends greet you. Greet my friends.

Revelation

John to the church in Ephesus:

You don't tolerate wicked men and you've endured evil men. God isn't pleased that you've left your first love. If you don't repent, he'll remove your church from its place of importance. He's pleased that you hate the Nicolaitans.

John to the church in Smyrna:

God knows that you're afflicted. You're poor in material things but rich in spiritual things. Be faithful to the end and He'll give you the crown of life.

John to the church in Pergamum:

You haven't denied your faith in God. He's not pleased that some of you eat meat sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality. If you don't repent, He'll strike you with His sword.

John to the church in Thyatira:

You're improving but God isn't pleased that you let that Jezebel teach his slaves to commit sexual immorality and eat meat sacrificed to idols. Hold on to what you have until He comes and He'll give you authority over the Gentiles.

John to the church in Sardis:

They say you're alive, but you're almost dead. God will acknowledge the few who're living moral lives before the angels.

John to the church in Philadelphia:

God has opened before you a door of opportunity. Since you've kept His Word, He'll keep you from the time of testing about to come on the whole world. He'll come soon.

John to the church in Laodicea:

Since you're neither hot nor cold, God will spew you out of His mouth. He who overcomes will sit with God on his throne.

In picturesque language, God tells John what will happen soon. God assures him that Rome will fall. Its rulers and emperor worship will be completely destroyed. Jesus will come and begin his reign. The New Jerusalem will come down from heaven and God will dwell with men.

God has already destroyed Jerusalem with its temple worship. Now he's going to destroy Rome and its emperor worship. This shows that He'll let nothing stand in the way of the advance of His Kingdom.